

Epi Update for Friday, November 8, 2019
Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology (CADE)
Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH)

Items for this week's Epi Update include:

- ***Legionella* increase highlights need for investigation, prevention**
- **CDC continuing education: Japanese encephalitis vaccination**
- **CDC releases 2018 healthcare-associated infections (HAI) report**
- **In the news: Here's why you need to get a flu shot, even if you don't want one**
- **In the news: Why didn't she get Alzheimer's? The answer could hold a key to fighting the disease**
- **In the news: More teens than ever are vaping. Here's what we know about their habits**
- **Infographic: How *Legionella* affects building water systems and people**

***Legionella* increase highlights need for investigation, prevention**

For the second year in a row, legionellosis case reports in Iowa far surpassed the four year average prior to 2018. There were 64 cases reported in 2018 and 59 have been reported so far in 2019. From 2014-2017, *Legionella* case reports ranged between 33 and 36 annually. The rise could be related to increased testing, but highlights the need to investigate and reduce potential sources of infection.

Legionella bacteria can be found in natural, freshwater environments, though generally not in high enough numbers to cause disease. However, when *Legionella* enters a water system that does not have adequate temperature and disinfectant levels it can grow to amounts sufficient to cause disease if aerosolized through devices such as cooling towers, hot tubs, or fountains. Groups at increased risk for legionellosis including current or former smokers, those with weakened immune systems, persons over 50 years of age, and those with chronic disease.

Health care providers and public health identify and prevent *Legionella* by asking about exposures to common sources of infection and providing education to reduce future exposures. In addition to the sources mentioned above, people can come into contact with *Legionella* via aerosolized water from showers and respiratory equipment that does not use sterile water or is not cleaned regularly. It is also important to ask about overnight travel, visits to health care facilities, and living in congregate settings.

Testing for *Legionella* should be considered for patients with pneumonia and a history of overnight travel, immune suppression, healthcare visits within the two weeks before onset of symptoms, or other risk factors. Preferred diagnostic tests include culture of a lower respiratory specimen on selective media and a *Legionella* urinary antigen test. Ordering both tests expands the species and serogroups that can be detected and allows for comparison of bacteria isolated from other infected individuals or environmental samples.

For more information about testing for *Legionella*, contact SHL at 319-335-4335 or visit www.shl.uiowa.edu/testmenu/menupages/legionella.xml.

For more information about *Legionella*, visit www.cdc.gov/legionella/index.html.

CDC continuing education: Japanese encephalitis vaccination

A new continuing education activity, *Recommendations and Reports: Japanese Encephalitis Vaccine*, describes updated ACIP recommendations for the prevention of Japanese encephalitis among U.S. travelers and laboratory workers.

Japanese encephalitis virus is closely related to the West Nile and St. Louis encephalitis viruses. The virus is spread by infected mosquitoes in Asia and the western Pacific. Reported cases of Japanese encephalitis are rare in the U.S., but other travel-related mosquito-borne illnesses are reported each year in Iowa. In 2019, 22 cases of malaria, five cases of dengue, and two cases of chikungunya have been reported in travelers in Iowa.

For more information about this education activity, visit www.medscape.org/viewarticle/918022

CDC releases 2018 healthcare-associated infections (HAI) report

The *2018 National and State Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Progress Report* is a snapshot of how each state and the country is doing in eliminating select HAIs. These include:

- CLABSI (Central Line-Associated Bloodstream Infections)
- CAUTI (Catheter-Associated Urinary Tract Infection)
- CDI (*C. difficile* Infection)
- MRSA bacteremia
- SSI (Surgical Site Infection) following colon surgery and abdominal hysterectomy
- VAE (Ventilator-Associated Event)

CDC generated this report based on 2018 data from the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN). The data is entered into the system by participating healthcare facilities.

When comparing 2018 state-level data to 2017, Iowa showed a decrease in CDI. CAUTI, MRSA bacteremia, VAE, and both types of SSIs remained relatively unchanged compared to 2017. The only infection type that demonstrated an increase was CLABSI. When comparing Iowa's progress to national starting points set in 2015, Iowa is below the national baseline for all infection types with the exception of VAE.

IDPH appreciates all the hard work of our partners throughout the state to understand and prevent healthcare-associated infections.

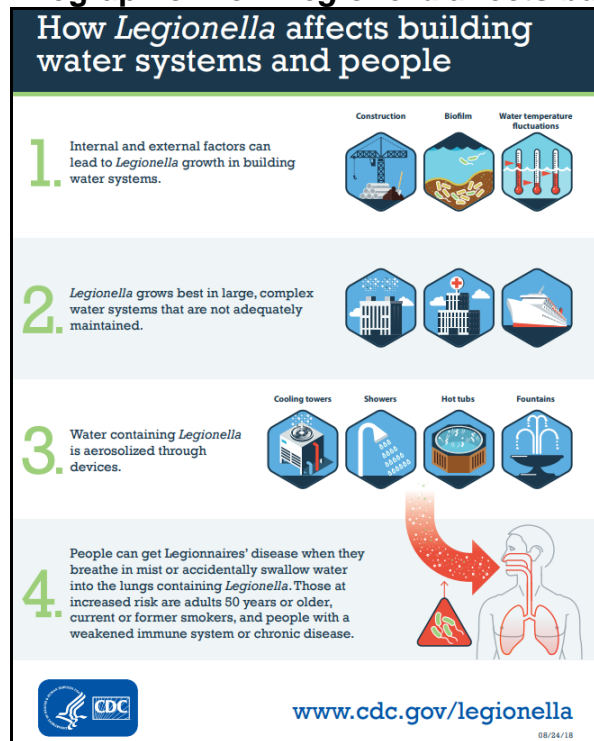
To view the complete report, visit arpsp.cdc.gov/.

In the news: Here's why you need to get a flu shot, even if you don't want one
ideas.ted.com/heres-why-you-need-to-get-a-flu-shot-even-if-you-dont-want-one/

In the news: Why didn't she get Alzheimer's? The answer could hold a key to fighting the disease
www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/resources/publications/aag/alzheimers.htm

In the news: More teens than ever are vaping. Here's what we know about their habits
www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2019/11/06/776397270/more-teens-than-ever-are-vaping-heres-what-we-know-about-their-habits

Infographic: How *Legionella* affects building water systems and people



To view in full size, visit

www.cdc.gov/legionella/infographics/legionella-affects-water-systems.pdf.

Have a healthy and happy week!

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